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AUTHOR Venn, Martha L.; And Others
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ABSTRACT

This guide offers suggestions to promote social interaction and communication of preschool children, thereby facilitating inclusion of children with speech and language delays into community settings. A preschool scenario is presented to illustrate problem areas in classroom communication. Guidelines are then offered for integrating learning opportunities into the daily preschool routines, maximizing natural opportunities with children, and anticipating circumstances that can be used to promote children's use of language and positive social interaction. The following techniques to promote communication are considered: changing communication and speech patterns, asking open-ended questions, pausing, using expansions, and offering praise and encouragement. The preschool scenario is then reexamined, and guidelines for modifying daily routines are offered. A form for recording a teacher action plan is provided. (SW)

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FACTS/LRE #3 INFORMATION SERIES

FACILITATING INCLUSION IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS

Creating Environments that Support the Communication and Social Interactions of Young Children

FACTS/LRE

Family And Child Transitions into Least Restrictive Environments
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSITIONS— AND THE AIMS OF FACTS/LRE

Transition—a process in time that occurs between events—takes place throughout our lives. There are the transitions we make quite frequently—traveling between home and work, picking up children after school, cleaning the house or apartment before receiving guests. And then there are transitions that signal the start of a whole new set of activities and routines.

Remember your first day of school? Your child's first day of school or day care? The first day on a new job?

How did you plan for these important transitions? Did you visit in advance? Purchase new clothes? Get a haircut? Double check the bus route?

Transitions often work best if they are planned. Presidents and governors have "transition teams" to assist with these milestones in their lives. The rest of us generally get by without dozens of paid helpers. Still, the decisions that are made, the events that take place and the feelings that arise during transitions have profound consequences in all of our lives.

Young children with special needs and their families experience several transitions. The first transition occurs when the child is born and becomes a member of the family. Other transitions take place as a child's disability or special need is identified and relationships with service providers are established. Later transitions take place as changes are made from one service provider or educational setting to another.

FACTS/LRE means Family And Child Transitions into Least Restrictive Environments. Our project produces publications and offers direct technical assistance to see that the transitions experienced by young children with special needs and their families are not treated as an afterthought but are given the serious attention they deserve. We focus especially on the transition that occurs as a child approaching age three prepares to exit from early intervention services. However, most of our materials are also relevant to transitions that occur at other ages.

About the FACTS/LRE Information Series: This booklet is one in a series designed to provide practical information to the various audiences concerned about transitions: families, educators, service providers, and members of state and local interagency councils. For more information about FACTS/LRE, please turn to the back of this publication.

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FACTS/LRE
University of Illinois
at Urbana-Champaign
61 Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, Illinois 61820
217. 333. 4123
FAX 217. 244. 7732

FACILITATING INCLUSION IN COMMUNITY SETTINGS

Creating Environments that Support the Communication and Social Interactions of Young Children

Martha L. Venn
Dale B. Fink
Sarah Hadden
Susan A. Fowler

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Introduction ..... *i*
Language and Social Interaction in Early Childhood Settings 1
A Visit to the Little Bo Peep Preschool 2
Integrating Learning Opportunities into Caring Routines 4
Some Techniques Which Promote Communication 6
Twenty-Five Ways to Offer Praise and Encouragement 9
When Can We Use These Teaching Behaviors? 10
Another Visit to the Little Bo Peep Preschool 14
Another Visit to the Little Bo Peep Preschool (with strategies identified) 16
Teacher Action Plan 18

Communication is at the heart of friendship and other human relationships. Age-appropriate mastery of language and speech enable a child to play with others and be involved in social interactions with them. The lack of speech or language makes interaction difficult. Sometimes the failure to develop communication skills results from a sensory impairment (such as being deaf) or from another type of disability. But even when the lack of speech and language does not stem from an existing developmental delay, a child's inability to play and communicate with others may isolate him or her over time and eventually lead to social, emotional, and developmental problems.

PLACEMENT DECISIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DELAYS

When children do not express themselves in ways that are readily understandable or do not respond easily to communication from others, what types of settings are most appropriate for their care and education? In many instances, family members, and service providers have concluded that they belong in specialized environments, and not in preschool or child care settings open to the general public. Many young children with special needs are automatically placed into special education preschools when they transition out of early intervention at age three. Community settings are often not considered as many people believe that trained certified staff employed by special education programs are the only individuals who possess the knowledge and skills needed to work with young children with special needs.

However, across the United States a growing number of families, local education agencies (LEAs), and other community-based agencies are exploring and achieving success with a different option: transitions into less restrictive

environments such as licensed family child care homes, Head Start classrooms, nursery schools, and child care centers. In some cases the child is dually enrolled—attending both a special education class and the other setting. In other cases children with special needs are attending only a community-based setting.

It is true that the staff in community-based settings do not usually have the kinds of training or credentials required of staff in specialized programs. Nonetheless, they may be able to learn what they need to know from family members and from specialists who are available to consult or collaborate with them. Moreover, these settings have something to offer that segregated programs do not have: a pool of typically developing peers who are playing, engaging in a variety of activities, and communicating with one another.

Simply immersing a child with special needs into this pool, however, accomplishes little. Unless the staff in the community settings work to facilitate inclusion the young children with special needs may exist on the periphery of this least restrictive setting, interacting little, if at all, with his or her typically developing peers. There are, however, many things that staff can do to facilitate the inclusion of all children into community settings. The purpose of this booklet is to outline these techniques.

As the ideas and practices discussed in this booklet become more widely incorporated into the thinking of preschool and child care staff , the options for young children with special needs will be expanded. The legal requirement that eligible children receive services in the "least restrictive environment" will take on greater meaning. Just as important, caregivers in these environments will become better attuned to the individual needs and communication styles of all the children in their care—regardless of ability or disability.

. . . ACROSS THE UNITED STATES A GROWING NUMBER OF FAMILIES, LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (LEAs) AND OTHER COMMUNITY-BASED AGENCIES ARE EXPLORING . . . TRANSITIONS INTO LESS RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENTS SUCH AS LICENSED FAMILY CHILD CARE HOMES, HEAD START CLASSROOMS, NURSERY SCHOOLS, AND CHILD CARE CENTERS.

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LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

If you work in an early childhood setting in any capacity—care provider, teacher, aide, director, bus driver, cook, secretary—you have an impact on the development of young children's language and social interactions. This publication is designed to assist you in thinking about how to increase positive learning opportunities for all children—not just the ones with identified *special needs*. How can you plan and carry out your day-to-day responsibilities in such a way as to promote language and communication by children and help them reach their capabilites? After reading this booklet, you will be in a better position to answer this for yourself.

THIS PUBLICATION IS DESIGNED TO ASSIST YOU IN THINKING ABOUT HOW TO INCREASE POSITIVE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL CHILDREN—NOT JUST THE ONES WITH IDENTIFIED *SPECIAL NEEDS*.

OVERLOOKED OPPORTUNITIES

Often we overlook opportunities for promoting communication skills and positive social interactions as we busy ourselves with the many pressing tasks that make up a typical day in an early childhood setting. You will notice a number of examples of this as we make a brief visit to Miss Kim's room at the Little Bo Peep Preschool.

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A VISIT TO THE LITTLE BO PEEP PRESCHOOL

In the large room housing the three-year-olds, five children are occupied in the housekeeping corner, a group of three others have Mr. Potato Heads, and the rest are using toys individually at tables or on the floor.

Samantha, the only child in the group known to have special needs, sits on the floor near some colored pegs and a pegboard, staring blankly toward the group with the Mr. Potato Heads. Miss Kim sits next to her and tries to help her focus on the pegs by giving her specific instructions, such as, "Show me a blue one." At first, Samantha seems to respond with interest, but after the fourth direction, she looks at Miss Kim, spreads her arms out, and throws the pegs. Miss Kim shakes her head as she picks up the pegs.

Two girls run across the room in dress-up clothes as Tommy chases them with a banana, while making shooting sounds. Miss Kim says, "Tommy, remember we don't play guns here! And anyway, give me that banana! It belongs in the fruit basket on the kitchen table." She takes it from him.

Lunch time is approaching and Miss Anne asks the children to clean up and get ready for lunch. Miss Kim turns her attention back to Samantha and sees that she has dumped all the pegs out again. She quickly squats down, scoops the pegs up, and puts them away. Samantha sits silently and watches her do this.

Miss Kim stands Samantha up and while holding her hand tells the rest of the children to come sit on the red (taped) line. The children watch the staff set the table. Next, the staff serve the food while the children fidget impatiently on the red line. Once the food has been served, Miss Kim announces, "It's time to eat!" The children race to the table to sit down. Miss Anne sets the radio to an adult contemporary music station, and Miss Kristin, a high school-aged volunteer, turns it up louder. When one boy elevates the volume of his conversation to overcome the background sound level, Miss Anne admonishes him: "Omar! Use your inside voice!"

As the children begin to eat, none of the staff are sitting with them; they will have their lunch break during nap time. The phone in the cubicled office area rings and Miss Kim goes to answer it. Samantha never chose a seat for lunch and has wandered over to

look out the window. Miss Kristin takes her by the hand to sit alone at the last table. There are no empty chairs at the other tables.

Miss Kim sits down briefly next to Samantha when she finishes with the telephone call. "Remember, Samantha—use your spoon," she says, handing the spoon to her. Tommy and two other children from the next table look over at Samantha, but she turns her gaze away from them. As soon as Samantha begins eating, Miss Kim gets up from the table. Samantha drops the spoon and begins picking up her macaroni and cheese with her fingers. "Samantha," Miss Kristin frowns at her, "we eat with spoons, not with our fingers." She grabs a paper towel, wipes Samantha's fingers off with a quick swipe, and walks away.

Miss Anne moves around the tables with a metal bowl filled with macaroni and cheese. She places a spoonful on the plates of those children who say they want more. Mary raises her hand to get Miss Anne's attention and in doing so, she knocks over her glass of milk. Miss Kristin comes over with a wet wash rag and wipes up the spill. She returns with more milk and a Kleenex to wipe Mary's tears away.

As the children finish eating, they are excused to get up and play before naptime. Samantha is still eating long after the other children have left and the teachers have cleared the tables and cleaned up the lunch area. Miss Kim starts to take the cots down and arrange them for nap time. She asks Miss Kristin to make sure Samantha finds her cot in its usual spot near the library corner.

INTEGRATING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES INTO CARING ROUTINES

Some of the behaviors of the staff in the above scenario may be troubling to readers. Yet, it is important to recognize that the staff is working very hard—covering the telephones as well as making sure that the basic needs of the children are met. Thanks to their efforts, play activities, eating, and sleeping take place within a clean, orderly environment. Moreover, they go out of their way to give extra attention to Samantha. So if there is a problem here, it is not due to laziness, irresponsibility, or an unwillingness to deal with a child who has special needs.

What, then, seems to be the source of the problem? It appears that these caregivers lack knowledge about the importance of promoting social interaction and communication among children. They are aware of the importance of getting children engaged with various play activities, in keeping the room clean and well-organized, in feeding the children, and in providing them an opportunity to rest. But do they recognize that the steps they take in trying to achieve these objectives may either help or hinder children in some of the most central tasks of their young lives—learning to communicate and to have positive social interactions? This seems to be a point they have not grasped. And if Miss Kim and Miss Anne have not grasped these points, they are surely not in a position to properly orient and train Miss Kristin, either. With very little guidance from the paid staff, she follows her own bent and does the best she can.

Toward the end of this booklet we shall see how the staff at Little Bo Peep manage the same routines—child-centered time, cleanup time, meal time, and rest time—in a completely different way once they become conscious of the importance of promoting social interaction and communication. Let us now introduce three guidelines which can help them—and you—to think about the way routines are conducted in early childhood settings.

GUIDELINE 1: THINK OF COMMUNICATION AND POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTION AS TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE FOR ALL CHILDREN.

Children's ability to express themselves will be more important to their future educational achievement than learning the "ABC Song." There is no song you can teach, no game you can play, and no "readiness" activity that will be more helpful to children's future learning than to have their caregivers enjoy and

GUIDELINE 1

THINK OF COMMUNICATION AND POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTION AS TWO OF THE MOST IMPORTANT OUTCOMES YOU WANT TO ACHIEVE FOR ALL CHILDREN.

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appreciate their efforts to express their thoughts in word, gesture, and other forms of communication.

The sound of children speaking to one another should be appreciated and celebrated like freshly fallen snow or the first flowers of spring. Just as you may encourage them to celebrate through art work the images of changing seasons—such as snowflakes and flowers—make sure you also celebrate their own use of language and communication.

GUIDELINE 2

MAXIMIZE NATURAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Don't displace the possibilities for meal time or snack time chatter by playing loud music in the background or trying to make announcements to the whole group. Find opportunities to write down and read back to children some of their own spoken words. Take pictures of children (and staff) working and playing together. Enlarge and display them like you would a picture of a firefighter or a nurse.

GUIDELINE 2: MAXIMIZE NATURAL OPPORTUNITIES.

Use the existing opportunities in your daily schedule for enhancing communication and social interactions. Practice in using language skills cannot be arbitrarily confined to a "language time," nor are peer relations confined to "recess time." In high school, students focus on world literature in one period, geometry in another, physical education or English in still others. During the preschool years, however, language mastery and peer relations can and should be built into any and all activities that engage children's attention, whether in the realm of science and nature, sensory development, artistic expression, or large and small muscle development. Child-centered time (also called "free play time" or "learning center time"), outdoor play, snacks and meals, clean-up, and transitions are all filled with possibilities for fostering children's communication and social interaction skills.

GUIDELINE 3: OBSERVE THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT GIVE RISE TO CHILDREN'S USE OF LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTION—WITH YOU OR WITH ONE ANOTHER—AND PLAN AHEAD TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN MORE FREQUENTLY.

Did one of the quieter boys just "happen to" initiate some language while you were helping him get ready to go outside? Could you plan to be with him again during the same time the next day?

Do arrival time and departure time offer some chances for one-to-one contact that may facilitate communication? Will some children initiate more

language with one another if you give them some kind of classroom job that generates social contact?

Do you plan ahead which children you will sit next to at meal times? What are the potential advantages and disadvantages of planning this in advance?

SOME TECHNIQUES WHICH PROMOTE COMMUNICATION

Now let's focus our attention on some specific caregiver behaviors. How can we work to ensure that the ways we communicate with young children will encourage their efforts to express themselves and socially interact with us and with one another? Here are five techniques to consider:

- Modifying communication and speech patterns
- Asking open-ended questions
- Pausing
- Using expansions
- Offering praise and encouragement

GUIDELINE 3

OBSERVE THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT GIVE RISE TO CHILDREN'S USE OF LANGUAGE AND POSITIVE SOCIAL INTERACTION . . . AND PLAN AHEAD TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN MORE FREQUENTLY.

MODIFYING COMMUNICATION AND SPEECH PATTERNS

Think back to the time when you taught your own child to play "patty-cake." You may have started out saying the words slowly, "Patty-cake, patty-cake, baker's man," while modeling the accompanying hand motions. As your child became more familiar with the words and motions, you may have increased your pace and used other kinds of cues (or signals) to help the child learn the game. For example, at the words, "roll them up and put them in the pan," you may have changed your voice tone, speeded up your pace, and leaned closer to the child as you waggled your arms. This is a great way of captivating children's attention and getting them to try to say the words and expressions.

This is an example of how we use different variations of speech when talking with young children. We slow down, simplify our words, modify what we say, and repeat familiar phrases. We may use a higher pitch in our voice, exaggerate a word, or adopt a melodic tone in order to cue a child into a specific part or content. All of these are good techniques to keep in mind, especially with children under three years old.

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. . . CONSIDER BUILDING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONING INTO ARRIVAL TIME . . .

ASKING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Open-ended questions are those which do not call for a single "correct" response by the child. Here are some examples:

How was your morning?

What would you like to play with next?

What do you know about frogs?

At Little Bo Peep, when the children arrive, Miss Kim likes to ask the children about their morning. If she asks, "Tommy, did you have any breakfast this morning?" this would be a ***closed-ended*** question. An appropriate response from Tommy would be simply ***yes*** or ***no***. Miss Kim can make her question open-ended by saying, "What did you do at home this morning?" or, "What's on your mind this morning, Tommy?" Now Tommy is encouraged to talk about his morning experiences or whatever else is on his mind. His answer is not limited to a one word response and there is no right or wrong answer. This not only provides a richer language experience for Tommy, but it also offers Miss Kim additional information that may be helpful to her as a teacher. Furthermore, showing Tommy that she is interested in what he has to say tends to enhance his sense of self-worth.

When a caregiver asks open-ended questions and pays attention to the responses, conversations usually last longer, are more interesting, and opportunities for language development are increased. If the children in your setting do not all arrive at the same time, then you should consider building open-ended questioning into arrival time. The children will quickly begin to expect and look forward to this opportunity for language, social interaction, and teacher attention.

PAUSING

Pausing is providing non-talking moments within an interaction or at the beginning of an interaction. These moments allow children opportunities to talk and give them a greater sense of control over the interaction. Some children need a longer time to put their thoughts together and talk. Other children may not ordinarily initiate conversations, but wait for you to do the talking. Pausing is a teaching behavior that encourages children to talk and caregivers to wait. Through your body language and facial expression, you signal to the child while you pause that he or she has your full attention.

You can use pausing to help children respond to the communication you initiate or to help them to initiate communication. For instance, some children will not respond quickly to things you say, whether in the course of one-to-one or group interaction. The pace of the conversation is too fast for them. This is

especially true if a child has speech and language delays but it can also be the case for many other children.

When Samantha arrives at Little Bo Peep, Miss Kim asks her about her morning. Miss Kim is used to the other children immediately telling her their morning stories. However, Samantha looks down at the floor to collect her thoughts, and by the time she may be getting ready to say something, Miss Kim busies herself with some nearby paint brushes and asks her if she is interested in coming over to the easel. If instead Miss Kim were to say nothing, smile at Samantha until she tips her head back up, and put the paint brushes out of her mind for a couple more minutes, she might be rewarded by a few words from Samantha about her morning. This would be a good example of the use of the pausing technique.

Another way for caregivers to use pausing techniques is to deliberately fall silent during routines where a child is expecting them to speak. For example, when Samantha arrived in the morning, she would hand her bookbag to Miss Kim without saying anything. Miss Kim took it from her, said something friendly to Samantha, and hung it on the hook where it belonged, as if she had read Samantha's mind. Once Miss Kim has learned to use this technique of pausing, she would handle this routine differently. When Samantha arrives, Miss Kim would kneel down, put her hands behind her back, and look expectantly, waiting for Samantha to tell her she needed help hanging up her book bag.

WHEN SAMANTHA ARRIVES, MISS KIM WOULD KNEEL DOWN, PUT HER HANDS BEHIND HER BACK, AND LOOK EXPECTANTLY, WAITING FOR SAMANTHA TO TELL HER SHE NEEDED HELP HANGING UP HER BOOK BAG.

USING EXPANSIONS

Expansions are rephrasings of what the child has just said, clarifying what the child has just said, and adding new information. By doing this, we are modeling for children new ways of talking and helping children to talk in longer sentences. It is an effective way to teach new vocabulary to children and an important support to children's communication abilities.

During the arrival routine at Little Bo Peep, Miss Kim has asked Tommy about his morning experiences. Tommy has responded by telling Miss Kim, "I have a new coat!" In the past, Miss Kim would have said, "Great!" and moved on to someone else. After learning about the technique of expansion, she says, "I see you have a new coat. It has purple, red, and blue frogs on it!"

Here are other examples of expansions:

Mary, seeing another child receiving a cup of juice, says, "cup." Miss Kim says, "A cup of juice, please."

Justin says, "gimme dat." Miss Kim asks, "give you the red helicopter?"

OFFERING PRAISE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Praising is providing specific positive feedback and encouragement to young children about what they are saying or doing. When we praise young children, we are providing information to them about their behavior or an activity in which they are involved. When we interact with children in a friendly manner about the things they are working on or talking about, we also signal that we are interested in them and like spending time with them. Positive comments and friendly social interaction with caregivers can help build children's self-esteem, encourage more efforts at communication, and help children know we are paying attention to them and what they are saying.

When praise is given, it is best if it is focused on the activity in which the child is engaged ("that's a really nice boat you've drawn—where is it going?") rather than on the child himself or herself ("you're so good at drawing.") When we focus on the activity, we encourage the child to get more involved in it. When we focus on the child, there is a danger the child will become less engaged in the activity and more concerned about seeking our approval.

For example, Miss Kim responds to Tommy's announcement about his new coat by saying, "Thanks for telling me about your new coat! How about showing Miss Anne your coat, too?" This shows the teacher's engagement in the object of his interest—his coat—and is a good example of positive encouragement. In the box that follows, we offer some "starter" ideas for incorporating words of praise and encouragement into your daily interactions with children.

TWENTY-FIVE WAYS TO OFFER PRAISE AND ENCOURAGEMENT

Below are 25 suggestions of ways that caregivers can praise and encourage children. It is important that you tailor your praise and positive feedback to specific child behaviors and avoid general praise statements. Remember to show your interest in the content of what the child is saying or doing and thereby extend his or her interest in it, rather than distracting him or her with thoughts about whether he is a "good boy" or she is a "good girl." When you give positive feedback, use positive facial expressions and tone of voice, lower yourself to be on the same physical level with the child, and be sure to use the child's name.

That's the way to do it!
WOW!
Good for you!
Good thinking!
Nice going!
Keep it up!
You remembered!
GREAT!

TERRIFIC!
You figured that out fast!
CLEVER!
What a good job!
Way to go!
I think you have got it now!
WONDERFUL!
You should be proud of yourself!
You made it look easy!

I noticed you did a good job!
Thank-you for helping today!
You did more today than before!
It must feel great to be done!
You remembered!
Nice going!
Congratulations!
I knew you could do it!

WHEN CAN WE USE THESE TEACHING BEHAVIORS?

Now that we have these five techniques in mind—modifying communication and speech patterns, open-ended questioning, pausing, expanding, and praising—when should we use them? Think about the last meal you shared with one or more friends, and the answer may become clear. You may have discussed the food, caught up on each other's travels, gossiped about mutual acquaintances, or reviewed daily events or items in the news. What techniques came into play to enhance communication? Did anyone inflect their voice, slow down or speed up their pace, or lean forward in their seat to draw extra emphasis to some new piece of information? Surely, there were open-ended questions asked and answered. Did any natural pauses occur? Did anyone repeat something back, perhaps embellishing it, or giving it a slightly different twist? Did you give or receive any praise or encouragement during the meal? If you live within the mainstream, North American cultural context, it is likely that all of these techniques came into play, because they are part of the repertoire that many people in our culture use when communicating with friends. When we work with children, however, we may have to apply them a bit more consciously until they became a natural part of our responses in the early childhood setting.

The best way to begin incorporating these techniques into early childhood settings is to build them into the routines that take place every day. These are naturally occurring opportunities for social interaction and language development. In other words, we are talking about promoting conversationally enriched routines that will be more satisfying for you and the children.

In order to help you make decisions about how to modify the routines in your own setting, we will offer a series of steps and questions for you to follow. An example of the way Miss Kim used this model in her classroom has been provided. A blank copy of a teacher action plan is included at the back of this booklet.

STEP 1: CHOOSE ONE OR TWO ROUTINES

Routines are events that occur on a regular basis, usually at least once a day. In early childhood settings these often include arrival, meals, snacks, child-centered free play, bathroom, transitions, table activities, music, outdoor play, large group (circle), small groups, clean-up, and departure.

One way to think about routines is to consider the flexibility of your own role within the routine. For instance, in a large group (circle) time, the person leading it has limited flexibility, since there is a need to manage the entire group. In contrast, staff tend to have great flexibility to move around and interact with individual children during child-centered free play time. If you are interested in thinking about the ways your classroom could provide greater support to children's social interaction and communication skills, you might want to begin by selecting one routine in which you have a great deal of flexibility and another in which your flexibility is more limited. In any case, focus on one or two routines at a time and not all of them.

WHAT THE LITTLE BO PEEP STAFF DECIDED

Miss Kim and her staff decided to focus on free play, clean-up, and the transition to meal time.

STEP 2: EXAMINE CHILD AND CAREGIVER BEHAVIORS

What usually takes place during this routine? It is important to be as specific as possible. For example, in one classroom, all the following actions are required of children before circle time begins:

(1) Put toys away.
(2) Clean-up the play areas.
(3) Find a carpet square with your name on it.
(4) Place carpet square along a red line.
(5) Sit on carpet square.

Once the circle time begins, the following behaviors are expected of all children:

(1) Listen and respond to the caregiver.
(2) Listen to others who are called upon to speak.
(3) Remain in sitting position.
(4) Use appropriate methods to gain caregiver's attention.
(5) Follow teacher directions at the end of circle, put carpet square away and go to the next activity.

STEP 3: MODIFY ROUTINES TO PROMOTE COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

After you have made lists of teacher and child behaviors associated with specific routines and asked yourself and answered questions relating to these respective roles and responsibilities, it is time to brainstorm ways to modify the routine to increase communication and social interaction opportunities and experiences.

MODIFICATIONS THE LITTLE BO PEEP STAFF DECIDED TO MAKE

Miss Kim and her staff brainstormed and identified possible modifications in their routines. They decided to try out a buddy system during free play time. Children would be asked to choose what area they wanted to play in, and then pick one or two friends to play with in that area. That way, Samantha and a few other children who almost always ended up playing alone would be partnered with other children and thus be more likely to interact and communicate with peers. Teachers would also participate in some of the child play—something they had never done—and encourage peer play. They also decided to move a few of the popular materials to higher shelves (still in view of the children, however) so that children would have to use language to ask for them. They also developed a list of class jobs, to be divided up each morning. Many of these jobs would involve communicating and interacting with peers. The jobs included helping to take attendance, telling the group when it was clean-up time, passing out the carpet squares, and setting the tables for snack and meals. Instead of teachers setting up for lunch, children would do this; one for each of the four tables that needed to be set. They would no longer play the radio during lunch time, and each teacher would sit at a table and engage in conversation with the children. They also agreed it would be unnatural to sit at the table without eating; from now on, they would each eat at least a little of everything that was served.

STEP 4: USE THE FIVE LANGUAGE-PROMOTING TECHNIQUES

Once you have redesigned your routine, it will be easier to use the teaching techniques discussed earlier in this booklet. For example, when children are using mostly one word responses, you will use frequent expansions to increase their vocabulary development. For children who have the communication skills to respond in three or more words, you may use a combination of open-ended

questions and expansions. For children who do not talk often, pausing would be a good technique to encourage their talking. Offering praise and encouragement should be used with everyone.

HOW THE LITTLE BO PEEP STAFF WILL USE THE TECHNIQUES

Once they redefined their own roles within the free play, clean-up, and transition to meal time, Miss Kim and her staff found it was not difficult to incorporate the techniques for promoting language and communication. The description of our second visit to the Little Bo Peep Preschool is printed twice—with and without the modifications and techniques highlighted. We suggest that readers find and name the various modifications that Miss Kim and her staff have made as well as the techniques they are using to enhance social interaction and communication. (Go back and re-read the first visit to Little Bo Peep first if it is not fresh in your mind.) We have included a form on which you can write down the modifications and techniques as you find them. The second version identifies the various modifications and techniques in brackets.

ANOTHER VISIT TO THE LITTLE BO PEEP PRESCHOOL

In the large room housing the three-year-olds, three children and Miss Kristin are busy in the housekeeping corner, a group of three others have Mr. Potato Heads, and the rest are working in pairs at tables or on the floor.

Samantha, the only child in the group known to have delayed language development, sits on the floor near some colored pegs and a pegboard, watching Julie place the pegs into the holes. Samantha pointed at Julie when Miss Kim asked her to choose a buddy for free play time.

"Who has a birthday this week?" asks Miss Kim, sitting down on the carpet beside the two girls. Miss Kim looks wide-eyed at Samantha and waits. Samantha, silent, grins from ear to ear. "Is it Julie's birthday?" asks Miss Kim. Julie giggles and shakes her head no. Miss Kim leans over and whispers in Samantha's ear. Samantha giggles and says "my birthday." Miss Kim smiles and says "Yes, Samantha, your birthday is Thursday!"

Miss Kim leaves Julie and Samantha making a pretend birthday cake and glances around the room. Two children run across the room in dress-up clothes as Tommy chases them with a banana while making shooting sounds. "Whoa, Tommy!" Miss Kim says as she puts her arm around him. Tommy halts and looks down at his feet. "That looks like a banana to me," says Miss Kim. "What do we do with bananas?" Tommy stammers and says "well, we eat them!" "You're right, Tommy. We do eat them and we also can make banana pudding with bananas," says Miss Kim. "Tommy, how about putting the banana back in the kitchen because it is almost time for lunch," asks Miss Kim.

The lunch hour is fast approaching and the other staff are now beginning to tell the children it's time to clean-up. All the children are paired up with a helper. One child in each pair is responsible for finding his or her clean-up partner. Tommy comes over to Miss Kim and pulls on her shirt. Miss Kim looks down and waits for Tommy to tell her what he needs. "I'm hungry!" he says. Miss Kim checks around the room and says, "Gosh Tommy, I am hungry too! What do you think we should do?" Tommy quickly says, "Eat!" "Well, before we eat we need to help Miss Anne and Miss Kristin get ready for lunch." Miss Anne comes over and asks "Who are

my helpers today?" The children play a quick guessing game in which they try and guess who the four helpers are. The children ask questions in order to figure which pairs of children are the helpers.

On each table is a set of plates, napkins, glasses, and silverware. The helpers have the job of making sure there is enough for everyone. Miss Anne conveniently "forgets" items. The helpers ask Miss Anne or Miss Kristen for the extra items they need.

Over in the circle area Miss Kim is asking the other children what they did over the weekend. Each child gets a chance to come up and sit on Miss Kim's lap and share his or her story. As soon as Miss Kim sees that the tables are set, she calls one of the children to come sit on her lap. All the rest of the children sit patiently waiting. It's Samantha's turn today to tell the children to go wash their hands, and go to lunch.

Since Samantha can't pronounce the children's names, Miss Kim has been showing her the children's names using sign communication. Miss Kim grins and pats Samantha on the back and says, "Wow, you did a terrific job remembering your friends' names!" Samantha is getting better and better imitating the names by sign and the children are beginning to recognize and imitate their names in sign when they get their name card from Samantha.

At each table there are four to five children and one of the staff sitting down. The helpers have placed name cards at each seat. The children have to find their names. The places that the children sit at are changed on a weekly basis. Jerry stands off in the carpet area. Miss Anne approaches Jerry and looks expectantly at him and waits. "I can't find where to sit," Jerry cries. "I'm sure we can have a friend help you find your seat" says Miss Anne. "I'll help, I'll help you!" exclaims Jesse and up he jumps. Off go Jerry and Jesse. Each of the staff briefly review the rules for the family-style lunch: "Everyone must pass the food around. If someone wants more, they need to ask for what they want, and remember to help your friends." Each table buzzes with chatter and giggles.

ANOTHER VISIT TO THE LITTLE BO PEEP PRESCHOOL

In the large room housing the three-year-olds, three children and Miss Kristin are busy in the housekeeping corner, a group of three others have Mr. Potato Heads, and the rest are working in pairs at tables or on the floor.

Samantha, the only child in the group known to have delayed language development, sits on the floor near some colored pegs and a pegboard, watching Julie place the pegs into the holes *[FREE PLAY ROUTINE]*. Samantha pointed at Julie when Miss Kim asked her to choose a buddy for free play time *[MODIFICATION OF ROUTINE]*.

"Who has a birthday this week?" asks Miss Kim, sitting down on the carpet beside the two girls. Miss Kim looks wide-eyed at Samantha and waits *[PAUSING TECHNIQUE]*. Samantha, silent, grins from ear to ear. "Is it Julie's birthday?" asks Miss Kim. Julie giggles and shakes her head no. Miss Kim leans over and whispers in Samantha's ear. Samantha giggles and says "my birthday." Miss Kim smiles and says "Yes, Samantha, your birthday is Thursday!" *[EXPANSION]*.

Miss Kim leaves Julie and Samantha making a pretend birthday cake and glances around the room. Two children run across the room in dress-up clothes as Tommy chases them with a banana while making shooting sounds. "Whoa, Tommy!" Miss Kim says as she puts her arm around him. Tommy halts and looks down at his feet. "That looks like a banana to me," says Miss Kim. "What do we do with bananas?" *[OPEN-ENDED QUESTION]*. Tommy stammers and says "well, we eat them!" "You're right, Tommy. We do eat them and we also can make banana pudding with bananas," says Miss Kim *[EXPANSION]*. "Tommy, how about putting the banana back in the kitchen because it is almost time for lunch," asks Miss Kim.

The lunch hour is fast approaching and the other staff are now beginning to tell the children it's time to clean-up *[ROUTINE]*. All the children are paired up with a helper. One child in each pair is responsible for finding his or her clean-up partner *[MODIFICATION OF ROUTINE]*. Tommy comes over to Miss Kim and pulls on her shirt. Miss Kim looks down and waits for Tommy to tell her what he needs *[PAUSING TECHNIQUE]*. "I'm hungry!" he

says. Miss Kim checks around the room and says, "Gosh Tommy, I am hungry too! What do you think we should do?" ***[OPEN-ENDED QUESTION]***. Tommy quickly says, "Eat!" "Well, before we eat we need to help Miss Anne and Miss Kristin get ready for lunch." Miss Anne comes over and asks "Who are my helpers today?" ***[MODIFICATION OF ROUTINE]***. The children play a quick guessing game in which they try to guess who the four helpers are. The children ask questions in order to figure which pairs of children are the helpers.

On each table is a set of plates, napkins, glasses, and silverware ***[ROUTINE]***. The helpers have the job of making sure there is enough for everyone. Miss Anne conveniently "forgets" items ***[MODIFICATION OF ROUTINE]***. The helpers ask Miss Anne or Miss Kristen for the extra items they need.

Over in the circle area Miss Kim is asking the other children what they did over the weekend ***[OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONING]***. Each child gets a chance to come up and sit on Miss Kim's lap and share his or her story ***[MODIFICATION OF ROUTINE]***. As soon as Miss Kim sees that the tables are set, she calls one of the children to come sit on her lap. All the rest of the children sit patiently waiting. It's Samantha's turn today to tell the children to go wash their hands, and go to lunch ***[MODIFICATION OF ROUTINE]***.

Since Samantha can't pronounce the children's names, Miss Kim has been showing her the children's names using sign communication. Miss Kim grins and pats Samantha on the back and says, "Wow, you did a terrific job remembering your friends' names!" ***[PRAISING]*** Samantha is getting better and better imitating the names by sign and the children are beginning to recognize and imitate their names in sign when they get their name card from Samantha.

At each table there are four to five children and one of the staff sitting down. The helpers have placed name cards at each seat. The children have to find their names. The places that the children sit at are changed on a weekly basis ***[MODIFICATION OF ROUTINE]***. Jerry stands off in the carpet area. Miss Anne approaches Jerry and looks expectantly at him and waits ***[PAUSING TECHNIQUE]***. "I can't find where to sit," Jerry cries. "I'm sure we can have a friend help you find your seat" says Miss Anne. "I'll help, I'll help you!" exclaims Jesse and up he jumps. Off go Jerry and Jesse. Each of the staff briefly review the rules for the family-style lunch: "Everyone must pass the food around. If someone wants more, they need to ask for what they want, and remember to help your friends." Each table buzzes with chatter and giggles.

TEACHER ACTION PLAN

Choose Routine _____

Examine Teacher Behaviors

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Examine Child Behaviors

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Identify Modifications to Routine that Build Communication and Social Interaction

_____
_____
_____
_____

Choose Teaching Behaviors that Promote Communication and Social Interaction

	What	When
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____

THE FACTS/LRE PROJECT

The FACTS/LRE project, initiated in January 1993, is an outreach/technical assistance grant funded by the federal Office of Special Education Programs, Early Childhood Branch. The Project Director is Dr. Susan Fowler.

BACKGROUND

The passage of Public Law 99-457 in 1986 created two early childhood programs for children with special needs, intended to provide a seamless service system for families and their young children between birth and age 5. Planning is required to avoid ruptures in this system when families and children change service providers.

Programs report confusion regarding their roles and responsibilities related to transition between services, screening, referral, evaluation, exchange of records, planning of transition, provision or continuation of services and conflicts regarding placement decisions, extended school year, procedural safeguards, preparation of personnel and other issues. At the same time, families describe a service system that too often is not responsive to their needs, not culturally and linguistically sensitive, and not delivered in the least restrictive environment.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Our two outreach channels are publications and technical assistance. In both our writing and our direct technical assistance, we encourage communities to build the following five components into the transition process:

1. Interagency agreements among service providers at the state and local levels
2. Transition planning for families to ensure they can make informed decisions
3. Timelines and guidelines which cover child assessments, transfer of records, program visits and other matters
4. Strategies to promote entry and adjustment of children—with specific emphasis on successful entry into nonspecialized, community-based settings to receive services in the least restrictive environment
5. Evaluation of the process

DESIGN: GRAPHIC SOLUTIONS, CHAMPAIGN, IL